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37
UK 65p

EXCALIBUR

FEATURING: **LOCKHEED**
AND **WIDGET**



**BLACK
PANTHER**

**THE DOUBLE-
SIZED EPIC
CONCLUSION!**

MARVEL[®] COMICS PRESENTS™

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Stan Lee Presents:

EXCALIBUR

HAVING A WILD
WEEKEND..... 1

WRITER — Michael Higgins
PENCILER — Erik Larsen
INKER — Terry Austin
LETTERER — Tim Harkins
COLORIST — Tom Vincent and Greg Wright

BLACK PANTHER

"PANTHER'S
QUEST"..... 9

WRITER — Don McGregor
PENCILER — Gene Colan
INKER — Tom Palmer
LETTERER — Joe Rosen
COLORIST — Mike Rockwitz

DEVIL SLAYER

.....25

WRITER — Dwight Zimmerman
PENCILER — Rodney Ramos
INKER — Jim Sanders
LETTERER — Jack Morelli
COLORIST — Mike Rockwitz

"DRAGON IN DISTRESS" — 7 of 8

A kidnapping caper and the most unlikely pair of super sleuths ever. This is one you've got to see to believe. Elementary, Excalibur, Elementary.

"D'AWN REUNION" — 25 of 25

If the Black Panther wants to learn if his mother resides within Anton Pretorius' elegant mansion, he must survive his battle with the psychotic mercenary, Elmer "Sex 'n Violence" Gore. At the moment, Gore is winning. While doing cartoon impressions, Gore is drowning the Great Cat in a beautiful, huge swimming pool. Dawn is on the horizon, but the Panther might not get to see it!

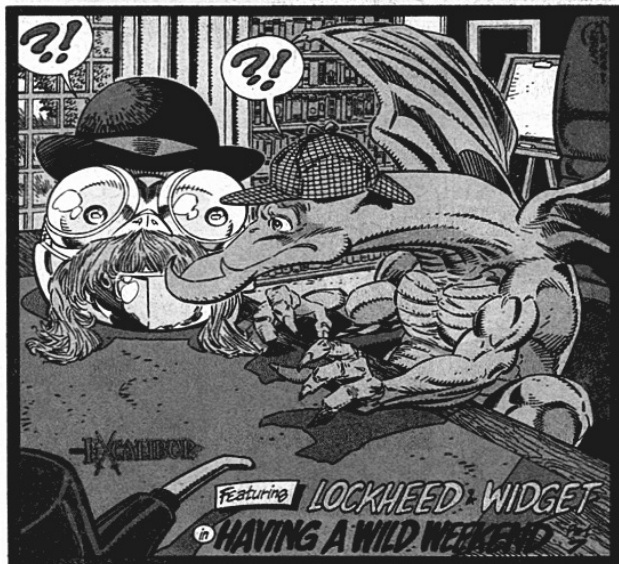
"TO SLAY THE DEVIL"

Eric Simon Payne—Devil-Slayer—is a demon-hunter. But the demons he now hunts are his own personal ones...

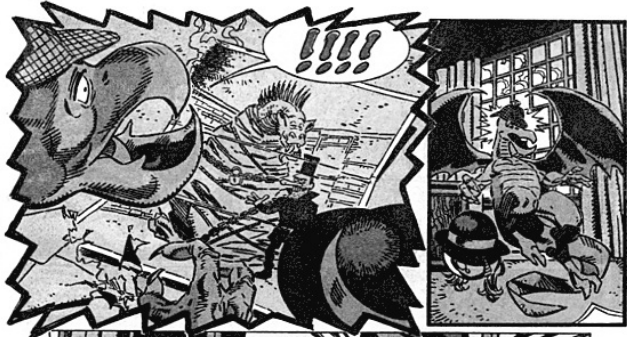
MARVEL® COMICS PRESENTS™ Vol. 1, No. 37, Late December, 1989.
Published by MARVEL COMICS, James E. Galt, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hudson, Group Vice President, Publishing, OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.
Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Published biweekly.
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DAMSEL IN DISTRESS







MEANWHILE...

OKAY, CAPTAIN BRITAIN, YOU'RE STILL LOST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF MAKE-BELIEVE...

...ONLY IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT YOUR STORYBOOK TALES MIXED UP!

HEY BUDDY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?



I THINK I'VE FINALLY FIGURED OUT THE PROBLEM WITH CAPTAIN BRITAIN! HIS SETUP IS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS!



AND...

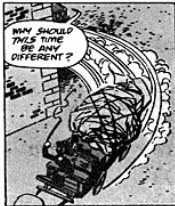
IT'S A SHAME I HAVE NO TIME FOR PSYCHOANALYSIS BUT I REALLY MUST BE GOING!

I'M TERRIBLY LATE FOR AN IMPORTANT DATE!

HEY! COME BACK HERE!

I'M... I'M...

SUDDENLY... FEEL SO GROGGY...



WHY SHOULD THIS TIME BE ANY DIFFERENT?



?!?

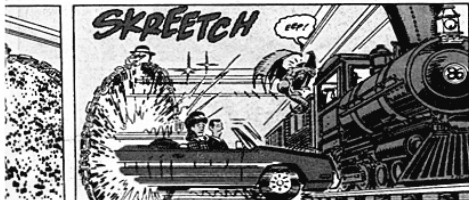
UH, WHICH WAY DID THEY GO?



NEVER MIND THAT! JUST FOLLOW THEM!



ER... MAYBE THAT WASN'T SUCH A GREAT IDEA!







OKAY, GANG,
EVERYTHING'S
TIED TOGETHER.



ALL I HAVE TO DO IS PHASE
US THROUGH THIS WALL, AND
EXCALIBUR SHOULD BE
REUNITED AT LAST!



SEE! WORKED
LIKE A CHARM!
THERE'S WIDGET,
LOCKHEED AND...
ER... LOCKHEED'S
"GIRLFRIEND"!



AND IF THOSE
POPPES I PLANTED
IN THE PROGRAMMING
ARE DOING THEIR STUFF...

...THE LOONIES
SHOULD BE FEELING
THE EFFECTS RIGHT
ABOUT NOW!



AND, THERE'S CAPTAIN
BRITAIN! HE WAS
THE ONLY ONE WHO
WASN'T ACTUALLY
IN SOME KIND
OF BIZARRE
MURDERWORLD!



UNTIL NOW, AT LEAST, EVERYTHING HE'D
BEEN EXPERIENCING TOOK PLACE
ONLY IN HIS MIND!

I'VE CHANGED
THE RULES A BIT,
THOUGH!

AND NOT A
MOMENT TOO
SOON! WE'RE
GOING TO FIND
THAT VORGE--
AND WHEN WE
DO, I'M GOING
TO STUFF THAT
GRIN OF HIS
DOWN HIS
THROAT!



CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE...

PANTHER QUEST

"It was strange, he thought, to find himself vaguely on the defensive for what yesterday was accepted necessity. In the years that had passed he had never once considered the possibility that he was wrong. It took her presence to bring about such thoughts. And they were strange, alien thoughts."

—From the novel, "I Am Legend,"
by Richard Matheson, 1954.

Hardbound edition published by Nelson Doubleday.

STARRING: THE BLACK PANTHER PART XXXI

THE GREAT CAT IS DESPERATE.

NOSTRILS ARE FILLED
WITH HEATED WATER
THAT TURNS TO
RELEASED VAPOR
WHEN IT REACHES
THE AIR.



DROWNING IN WATER
WARM AS A SOOTHING
BATH.

ANTON PRETORIUS'S EYES ARE
BLEAK WITH INEVITABILITY.

NEARLY EVERY DAY, FOR ALMOST THIRTY YEARS,
HE HAS FOUGHT AGAINST THE IDEA THAT THIS
DAY IN SOME FORM, WOULD HAPPEN.

CONFRONTATION.

EXPOSURE.

GO AHEAD.
LOCK ME UP.
IT WILL NOT
HELP YOU.

ALL YOUR FETTERS
AND PRECAUTIONS
ARE PATHETIC.
THEY WILL NOT
STOP WHAT IS
GOING TO HAPPEN.

EXPULSION FROM THE
SELECT, INNER CIRCLE OF
PARLIAMENTARY POLICY
DECISIONS.

HE HAS LIVED
WITH SECRETS
SO CONTRADI-
CTORY AND IN-
FLAMMATORY
THAT SOMETIMES
HE IS CHALLENGED
WITH THE SENSE
OF BEING TWO
SEPARATE MEN.

HE HAS LIVED WITH SECRETS
MANY OF HIS BRETHREN WOULD
HOLD AS PERVERSE, AND IN ANY
DISCUSSION OF SUCH CONDUCT, HE
WOULD PUBLICLY AGREE WITH THEM.

HOW COULD HE EXPECT THEM TO
COMMISERATE WITH HIS PLIGHT?

HE COULD
NOT BEGIN
TO EXPLAIN
IT TO THEM.

AND HE
PRIDED
HIMSELF
ON HAVING
A PERSUA-
SIVE WAY
WITH WORDS.

MAGISTRATE OF COMMUNICATIONS,
INDEED! IF THEY ONLY KNEW!

I'M GOING TO CHECK
ON THE LATEST REPORT
ON SECURITY MEASURES.

I WOULDN'T RAISE HOPES
TOO MUCH, RAMONDA. I
TRULY DON'T WANT YOU TO
BECOME DEPRESSED IF
THIS TURNS OUT BADLY.

I WOULD SPARE
YOU FROM IT--

THEY WOULD BE
APPALLED TO LEARN
A HIGH-RANKING
CABINET MEMBER
LOVED OR WAS OB-
SESSED WITH DESIRE
FOR A BLACK WOMAN.

-BUT I KNOW OF NO OTHER
WAY TO STOP OUR WHOLE
WORLD FROM CHANGING.



STRIVE FOR A HAND-HOLD!



JAG THE FLOW BACK INTO GORE'S MIDSECTION.



THE SWIRLING, TEPID WATER SLOWS HIS THRUST. GORE'S FIRM STOMACH HARDLY NOTICES THE REPEATED MANEUVER.

THE WAAA-BIT & DROWN-DED!



HE HAS TO CONSCIOUSLY FIGHT INHALING!

KEEP THE LIPS CLOSED.

DYING!



THE LYRIC LYRICS ARE MUFFLED BY WATER, YET HE CAN ENJOY ROCK'S FACE, A FACE EXHIBITING TO THE DELICIOUS IMPULSE OF MANIA-CAE SONG.

THE IMAGE OF MISERABLE CARTILAGE OF BROKEN NOSE, SO VIVID IN HIS HEAD.



AND HE WILL NEVER FORGET THE DARK EYES GLITCHING IN PAIN AND SPILLED BLOOD.

ABOVE THIS DELIGHTED EYES, A BRISLY RIDGE OF SCAR TISSUE NARROWED ACROSS THE BROW.



C'MON, WABBIT... GIVE UP THE O...

BOOST ALREADY!

THOUGHT ANTRAPES ON THE ILLUSORY FACE OF HIS KILLER AND THE SHARP CERTITUDE HE IS DYING. HOW DID GORE COME TO HAVE SUCH A SCAR?



AND WITH A THOUGHT SHOULD NOT HAVE...

...AFTER ALL, HE IS DYING OXYGEN TWO HAND LENGTHS ABOVE HIS HEAD...



--COMES STARTLING INSPIRATION!
ONLY SECONDS LEFT TO SEE IF THE
IDEA WILL WORK.

BLACK SPOTS DANCE BEFORE HIS
EYES WITH WILD ABANDON.

BLOOD POUNDS LIKE
FURIOUS DRUMS IN
HIS TEMPLES.

HIS ARMS ARE BLURRING;
FINGERS GOING NUMB.

DON'T
BLACK
OUT!



RAW FINGERTIPS TRACE THE SCAR TISSUE.
HIS FINGERNAILS DIG IN SAVAGELY TOP AND BOTTOM OF
SCAR-RIDGE. IT IS LIKE TRYING TO PITY AGAINST AN
OYSTER OBSTINATELY REFUSING TO YIELD A PEARL.



INTUITIVELY, GORE
REALIZES WHAT HE
IS TRYING TO DO.
AND WHIPS HIS HEAD
BACKWARD TO ESCAPE
THE GRIP--

AND
AIDS IN
ACCOM-
PLISHING
THE ACT.

SCAR TISSUE
SEPARATES!

FLESH AND MEAT
TEAR TO SKULLBONE.



A RUSHING BLOOD-TORRENT
FLOODS INTO GORE'S EYES!

GRIP LOST! SWING
INEFFECTUAL! BLINDED
BY HIS OWN BLOOD!

AIR RUSHES INTO HIS LUNGS, FEEDING OXYGEN-STARVED BLOOD--

--AND THE GREAT CAT IS ALIVE, FIERCE AND DEMANDING.



HE IS UNAWARE THAT HIS NOSTRILS SWALLOW
A MAN AS HEAVY
THAT ERUPTS FROM HIS CHEST.

WATCH OUT! LIFT
A MAN AS HEAVY
AS GORE WRONG--

--AND YOU'LL
GIVE YOUR-
SELF A
NERVIA.

YOU HAVE ENOUGH
DAMAGE TO RECOVER
FROM WITHOUT ADD-
ING THAT UN-
PLEASANT
INJURY!



WHAT
HAPPENED
TO YOUR
SINGING,
GORE?



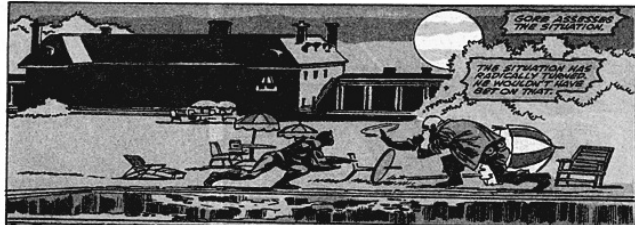
OR
YOUR
SMILE?



AREN'T YOU
ENJOYING YOUR-
SELF ANYMORE?

CAN'T ANSWER,
HUH?

IF I'M THE
"PUSSYCAT"...
I GUESS I'VE
GOT YOUR
TONGUE!



GORB ASSESSES THE SITUATION.

THE SITUATION HAS RADICALLY TURNED. HE WOULDN'T HAVE BET ON THAT.

HE IS ON THE DEFENSIVE. TACTICALLY, HE IS NOT FOND OF THAT POSITION. STILL, HE WILL NOT GIVE IN. HE WILL NEVER QUIT. SIMPLE FACT. STILL, HE IS SURE THE PUSSYCAT WILL UNDERESTIMATE.

NONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO EVER OPPOSED HIM AND WENT DOWN IN DEFEAT UNDERSTOOD THAT IM-PLACABLE TRAIT.

THAT DETERMINATION GOES BACK TO THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS VERY YOUNG TO THE PRESENT --

HWIT?



--FROM GRADE SCHOOL TAUNTERS TO THE SOLDIERS OF VARIOUS ARMIES.

ELMER "SOCK 'N' VIOLENCE" GORB COULD TAKE IT.

COME IN CLOSE, PUSSYCAT. THAT'S IT!

LET ME HAVE ONE CLEAN SWIPE AND I'LL GUT YOU SO QUICK--

--YOU'LL BE LYING WITH HALF YOUR BONES SPLATTERING ON THE POOL TILES BEFORE YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT HAPPENED.







SHE

IS THE
ONLY
ONE

WHO
CAN
TURN
ME
AWAY.

LOCKED AND BARRED.

KRAASH

ONE
LAST
BARRIER.

EASY TO
CRAWL
VENT.

THE GREAT CAT,
LANDING, DEFIANT
AND CONFIDENT.

HE SEES THE
WOMAN --

-- CAT EYES ALERT TO THE SCARS ON THE
METAL REINFORCED BED-POST --

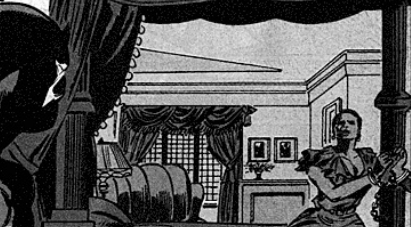
-- AND HE CAN VISUALIZE MANY PAST
FUTILE EFFORTS TO BREAK FREE.

YEARS OF SCARRING
THE WOOD AND
LACERATING FLESH--

-- NEITHER WOOD,
METAL NOR SPIRIT
YIELDING.

THE GREAT CAT
IS LOST TO HIM.

HE IS LEFT WITH THE
MAN HE IS, T'CHALLA,
KING OF THE WARRIORS.



YET, IN TRUTH,
NOT EVEN THAT.

ONLY THE
ACNING
SON IS
REALLY IN
THE ROOM.

ARE YOU--?

AFRAID TO ASK.





T'CHALLA?

--MY MOTHER?

YESYESYES

HE MOVES WITH THE SKILL OF THE GREAT CAT--

--EVEN AS HE MARVELS AT THE TEARS RUSHING TO HIS EYES.

SHE IS WARM.

SO WARM.

THIN UNDER HIS HANDS, BUT TAUT WITH HARD STRENGTH AND UNWIMPRISONED PASSION.

KRAAK



I WROTE THAT LETTER BECAUSE
I FEARED FOR YOUR LIFE.
SO MANY AGAINST YOU.

A LOT OF THAT FEAR
COMES FROM THE PAST.
I LOST MY FATHER...YOUR
MATERNAL GRANDFATHER...
DURING A PROTEST HE
ATTENDED, THAT WAS
PREACHING PEACEFUL
BOYCOTT.

HE WAS MURDERED BY
INSTITUTIONALIZED
WHITE GOVERNMENTAL
FORCES.

I LEFT WAKANDA TO RETURN TO
MY HOMELAND TO BURY MY
FATHER. AND YES, BEFORE YOU
ASK, YOUR FATHER CAME WITH ME
FOR THE FUNERAL... BUT THE
DEMANDS OF BEING A KING
CALLED HIM BACK, SHORTLY
THEREAFTER.

THIS WAS DURING
THE TIME THAT THE
MANY UNIQUE
PROPERTIES OF
VIBRANUM WERE
BEING DISCOVERED,
AND HE HAD TO
CONTENT WITH THE
WAYS SUCH TECHNO-
LOGY WOULD ALTER
HIS COUNTRY.

MEANTIME, I HAD
STAYED TO HELP
CONSOLE MY FAMILY.
I BECAME MORE
AWARE OF HOW
UNJUSTLY MY
FATHER HAD DIED,
AND I JOINED
A PROTEST AGAINST
THE POLICE WHO
HAD FIRED ON
THE CROWD. WE
WERE LUCKY THEY
ONLY USED CLUBS
ON US. I WAS
ARRESTED THAT
DAY, THOUGH YOUR
FATHER NEVER
KNEW IT. FOR LIKE
MANY OTHERS
IMPRISONED,
I WAS SOON TO
SIMPLY CEASE
TO EXIST.

THAT WAS THE
DAY I FIRST MET
PRETORIUS. HE
SAW ME WHILE I
WAS IN A DETEN-
TION CELL. DAY
AFTER DAY, HE
KEPT RETURNING,
LOOKING LIKE HE
WANTED TO LEAVE,
BUT COULDN'T.
I WAS BEWILDERED
BY THE CONFLICT
OF DESIRE AND FEAR
I SAW IN HIS EYES.
NOW, I KNOW HE WAS
FIGHTING WITH
HIMSELF...A
FIGHT HE WAS
LOSING.

WE WERE BOTH
CONDEMNED
THE DAY HE
GAVE IN TO HIS
OBSESSION
TO POSSESS
ME. IT WAS
EASY FOR HIM
TO GET ME TO
EMERGE FROM
THE DETENTION
CELL.

EASY FOR
THE PAPER-
WORK ON MY
ARREST TO
DISAPPEAR.

EASY TO
IMPRISON
ME HERE TO
KEEP ME
HIDDEN
FROM THE
PUBLIC
CIRCLES...

--WHERE INTERRACIAL AFFAIRS WERE CONSIDERED **IMMORAL**. AT ANY RATE, I WROTE THE LETTER, REJECTING YOU WITH **BITTER HEART BUT DRY EYE**.

THAT LETTER... I HELD IT IN MY HAND AND KNEW IT WAS FROM YOUR HAND... KNEW A LITTLE CHILD HAD DIED--

--AND I ALMOST LEFT... BECAUSE I THOUGHT... THIS QUEST COSTS TOO MUCH.

--BUT THE REALITY OF APARTHEID IS A COMMITMENT OF A **TERRIBLE DEED** THAT WILL NOT LOOSEN ITS STRANGLEHOLD ON HIM--

--ON ME... ON ALL PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY, AND SO, HE BECOMES MORE DESPERATE.

AND THEN I REALIZED HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST ME, IF I GAVE IT UP, AND GIVING IT UP WOULD NOT CHANGE WHAT HAD HAPPENED.

A FRIEND TAUGHT ME TO UNDERSTAND THAT.

COST ME, FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

I AM SORRY. I DID NOT WANT TO LOSE MY SON, AS I HAD MY FATHER AND HUSBAND.

YOU SHOULD NOT BE SORRY. HE SHOULD.

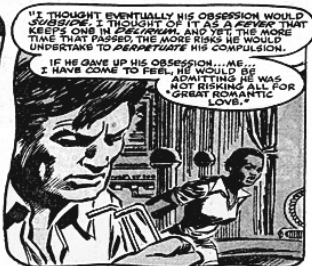
IN A WAY, PRETORIUS /S/, HE WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO AVOID ALL THIS--

WHEN I WAS GROWING UP... FATHER NEVER TALKED ABOUT YOU... BUT I REMEMBER TIMES WHEN I ASKED HIM ABOUT YOU... AND HE WOULD LOOK SO VULNERABLE... SO STRUCK WITH A **LONGER PAIN** HE NEVER CONFIDED.

WHY DID HE NOT SEARCH FOR YOU? WHY DID THE MENTION OF YOU CAUSE HIM SUCH **SORROW**?

YOUR FATHER DID SEARCH FOR ME, BUT IT WAS AS IF I HAD BEEN SWALLOWED BY THE WORLD. PRETORIUS HAD PICTURES TAKEN OF US... YOU CAN IMAGINE WHAT KIND--

--AND THROUGH SOURCES YOUR FATHER WOULD CONSIDER **RELIABLE** HAD THOSE PHOTOS SURPRISINGLY DISCOVERED, THE STORY ACCOMPANYING THOSE PICTURES WAS THAT I HAD LEFT HIM FOR ANOTHER MAN.





YOU STAND THERE AND CALMLY SAY "HELLO" TO ME?



AFTER YOU HAVE STOLEN MY MOTHER FROM MY FATHER AND ME? AFTER YOU IMPRISONED AND RAPED HER?

AFTER YOU HAVE GIVEN ORDERS UPON ORDERS TO HAVE ME KILLED?



WHAT ELSE TO SAY?



I THINK OF MYSELF AS A MAN OF *PEACE*... PERHAPS I LIE TO MYSELF.

THOUGH I HAVE FOUND MYSELF THRUST INTO *CRUCEL CONFLICTS*, SOME THAT ENDED IN DEATH, STILL IT WAS NEVER MY *INTENT*. I WOULD PREFER TO GO THROUGH LIFE WITHOUT HAVING TO KILL ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.



TONIGHT TWO VIOLENT MEN DIED AND A GOOD FRIEND WAS NEEDLESSLY BLOODED. YOU SEE WHAT APARTHEID BRINGS... REASONABLE MEN LOSING REASON... PATIENCE READY TO STRIKE BACK IN KIND.



IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO HURL YOU FROM HERE.



BUT NOT EASY FOR YOU TO LIVE WITH, MY SON. PUT HIM DOWN, PLEASE.

LET HIM LIVE IN THE RUINS OF HIS LIFE. EVERYTHING HE HAS DONE WILL BE *EXPOSED* NOW.



TO SLAY THE DEVIL

DEVIL-SLAYER

GENERAL,
YOUR TELEGRAM
WAS A SHOCK! YOU
KNEW IT WOULD BE,
AND YOU ALSO KNEW
THERE WAS NO WAY
I COULD REFUSE
THIS MEETING!

YOU'VE GOT
SOME HEFTY
EXPLAINING TO
DO! STARTING
WITH--

HOW AN AIR FORCE
MAN KNOWS ABOUT
XENOBENESIS, THE DEMONS'
PLOT TO RECONQUER EARTH,
AND YOUR ROLE IN
DEFEATING THEM? *

I'M IN
DEFENSE
MR. **DAYNE**!
IT'S MY BUSINESS
TO KNOW!
DRINK?

THE REASON
I ASKED YOU
HERE IS BE-
CAUSE WE
NEED YOUR
UNIQUE
HELP!

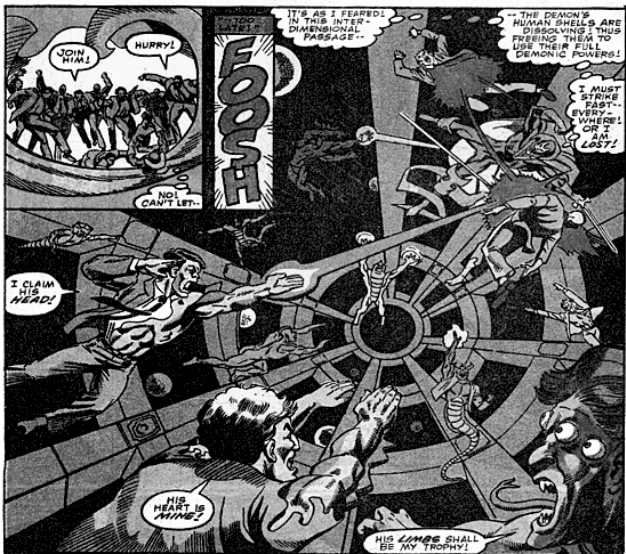
WHY WAIT?
WITH ONE
DEMONBOLT,
I--

STOP, FOOL!
YES, **DEVIL-SLAYER**
HAS ENTERED OUR
TRAP, BUT HE IS
STILL TOO
DANGEROUS!

WAIT FOR
BALTHAZAR'S
SIGNAL, THEN WE
WILL HAVE BOTH
HIM AND HIS
PRECIOUS **SHARD**
CLOAK!

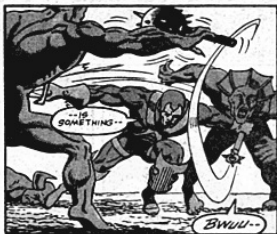
*SEE THE DEFENDER'S #58-60--TK.















IT'S OVER.

OR
IS
IT?

I DON'T NEED MY
RECOVERING PSY-
CHIC SENSE TO
TELL ME THAT
HAVING THIS EN-
CHANTED SWORD...



...AND
COMING TO
THIS FORLORN
LAND OF
TRAGEDY AND
MYSTERY
WAS NO
ACCIDENT!



YOU CAUSED BOTH TO
HAPPEN, DRAGONFANG.
WHY WAS IT A TEST?
AM I TO BE YOUR
NEW MASTER?



AAAA!
MY
HAND!



IT SEEMS THE ANSWER
IS NO! THEN, WHAT?
PERHAPS... YOUR
MISTRESS... NEEDS YOU!
PERHAPS, INSTEAD OF
PEACE IN THE TRANS-
CENDENT PLANE...

VALKYRIE HAS ENCOUNTER-
ED A WAR!



BUT TO REUNITE
BOTH, I NEED AN
IRRESISTIBLE
PSYCHIC BRIDGE!
SOMETHING LIKE
THIS! HER...

...REMAINS.



IT'S DONE.
FAREWELL,
FALLEN
COMRADE...



...FARE-
WELL,
VALKYRIE!

THE END.

DEVIL-SLAYER™

VS. HIS PERSONAL DEMONS!

